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## Senate Committee puts off push-pull ban, approves independent rail safety study

*Victims and victims' families of the Glendale Metrolink crash of January 2005 traveled to Sacramento to testify in favor of the bill.*

(SACRAMENTO, CA) -- The Senate Transportation and Housing Committee amended legislation by Assembly Majority Leader Dario Frommer that would have banned the dangerous practice of push-pull train configuration in California. The committee instead approved requiring the University of California to conduct a comprehensive study on banning push-pull and improving commuter rail safety.

"I am disappointed that push-pull configuration will not be immediately banned in California," Frommer said. "However, this bill moves California closer to ending this and other unsafe commuter rail practices."

At 6 a.m. on January 26 nearly one year ago, a commuter Metrolink train operating in push-pull mode crashed in Glendale after a driver parked his SUV on the tracks, resulting in the deaths of 11 persons and injuries of 200 more.

In response to the crash, Frommer requested that the Assembly Special Committee on Rail Safety be created to focus on Metrolink's practice of using push-pull configuration.

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## Assembly Majority Leader supports mayoral plan for reform of LAUSD

*Frommer agrees to coauthor legislation to make much needed changes to the Los Angeles Unified School District.*

(SACRAMENTO, CA) -- Assembly Majority Leader Dario Frommer joined Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Senate Majority Leader Gloria Romero, and Speaker Fabian Núñez among others in supporting legislation to reform the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Recent studies have shown that 81% of LAUSD middle schools students attend failing schools, and that LAUSD 8<sup>th</sup> graders are lagging two years behind their peers in New York City in such a necessary subject as math.

"Too many children enrolled in Los Angeles Unified School District are not receiving the kind of education they need to achieve their dreams and be successful," Frommer said. "We owe it to our kids to do everything possible to make sure they are getting the education they need to compete in a world economy."



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Hearings were held in July that focused on Metrolink's practice of using push-pull configuration following allegations that pushed trains are more likely to derail because the lighter passenger cabs in the front could be pushed off the tracks more easily.



Several victims and victims' families of the Glendale Metrolink crash met with Frommer at Bob Hope Airport in Burbank and traveled to Sacramento to lobby for the push-pull ban.

Assembly Bill 1699 now heads to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote. ♦

## Frommer to host identity theft workshops

*United States Secret Service, Glendale and Burbank Police Departments to join Majority Leader in raising awareness about identity theft.*

(SACRAMENTO, CA) – Millions of Americans nationwide unknowingly are targets of identity theft every year. An increasingly popular gateway for identity theft and fraud is mail theft. Criminals are able to steal important financial documents from mailboxes for the purpose of using or selling that information fraudulently.

Majority Leader Frommer has introduced AB 2886 to make mail theft a state crime and would stiffen criminal penalties for the trafficking of personal identifying information. The bill would also provide Californians with increased protections against identity theft and establish stricter penalties for criminals.

Together with the United States Secret Service and the Glendale and Burbank Police Departments, Frommer will also host identity theft workshops in Glendale and Burbank to help constituents learn how they can protect themselves from identity theft and how AB 2886 will aid in that effort.

For more information call (818) 240-6330 ♦

The legislation will include provisions to:

- Make teachers and parents full partners in the decisions that affect schools
- Give the Superintendent increased authority over personnel, business operations, and budgeting, and empower a new school leader to cut the bureaucracy while moving more resources to schools
- Establish a Council of Mayors to review the budget and coordinate joint-use and campus safety efforts
- Ensure a role for the Mayor of Los Angeles with the leadership of the LAUSD by granting the Council of Mayors both a role in the selection and final ratification of the Superintendent
- Establish a Mayor's Community Partnership for School Excellence
- Establish a six-year sunset provision with the opportunity to extend reforms and final evaluations under established education criteria. ♦

## Bills on prescription drugs, identity theft, Armenian education move forward

*Legislation by Frommer now head to the Senate Appropriations Committee and Senate Floor for approval.*

(SACRAMENTO, CA) -- Throughout recent months, various Senate committees have passed legislative bills proposed by Assembly Majority Leader Dario Frommer dealing with such issues as prescription costs, identity theft, and the incorporation of the Armenian language into the California Subject Examination for Teachers.

### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

In particular, the Senate Health Committee passed legislation by Frommer that would provide patients relief from skyrocketing prescription drug costs. Californian taxpayers spent almost \$3 billion for prescription drugs in the Medi-Cal program in 2002-03, a figure that rose to \$3.8 billion in 2003-04.

Frommer's AB 2877 would require the state to establish a Web site providing consumers with price comparisons at pharmacies statewide for nearly 150 commonly prescribed drugs and have information about prescription drugs that could be purchased safely from international pharmacies.

### IDENTITY THEFT

The Senate Public Safety Committee also passed a bill by Frommer designed to combat a dangerous trend in identity theft. During 2005, California ranked third in the nation in this growing crime trend reporting 45,175 victims of identity theft.

*BILLS continued on page 3*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, August 7, 2006

Legislature reconvenes.

Thursday, August 17, 2006

Identity Theft Workshop

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Glendale Public Library, 222 E. Harvard Street, Glendale

Thursday, September 14, 2006

Identity Theft Workshop

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Buena Vista Library, 300 N. Buena Vista Street, Burbank

9:30 p.m. Thursdays

“Capitol Connection with Assemblyman Dario Frommer”

Charter Communications Channel 25

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In particular, criminals are increasingly turning to individuals' mailboxes to steal personal information and traffic such information for money.

Because mail theft is under federal jurisdiction, local law enforcement cannot prosecute these criminals. Meanwhile, the postal service is overwhelmed with high priority organized theft rings and is unable to aid individuals who are violated.

Frommer's legislation, the Personal Information Trafficking and Mail Theft Prevention Act of 2006, will create a new section under the penal code specifically addressing mail theft, making it a misdemeanor or felony under state law depending on the offense. In addition, AB 2886 will make personal information trafficking a felony in California.

### ARMENIAN TEACHING CREDENTIAL

Also, the Senate Education Committee passed legislation by Frommer that would expand the single subject foreign language California Subject Examination for Teachers to include the Armenian language. This would permit high schools, colleges, and universities to offer the Armenian language as a course in the curriculum and will guarantee that such courses be taught by teachers credentialed in Armenian.

Of the 1,064,578 English learners enrolled in California, 12,786 students said Armenian was their native language.

“Our state boasts the largest Armenian population outside of Armenia, yet we have no program available for teachers who want to be credentialed in the Armenian language,” Frommer stated. “This bill will not only better equip teachers in districts with large Armenian populations, it will also allow all interested students to study the Armenian language in high schools, colleges and universities.”

## Frommer secures \$300K extra in budget for schools

*GUSD, BUSD students would receive boosts in equalization funding.*

(SACRAMENTO, CA) -- In partnership with Assemblywoman Lois Wolk (D-Davis), Assembly Majority Leader Dario Frommer successfully lobbied the Assembly to earmark \$300 million in its budget plan for equalization funding for the state's K-12 school districts, as well as \$100 million in funding for declining enrollment.

“We are pleased that the money is in the budget, and we're going to fight to keep it in the budget as it's reviewed by the Budget Conference Committee,” Frommer stated.

The additional \$300 million in equalization funding provides that the Glendale Unified School District is to receive an additional \$88 per student, more than double the average award of \$40 per student. The Burbank Unified School District is also estimated to receive \$74.60 per student. In total, the equalization funding estimate for Glendale Unified School District would be about \$2.46 million, while the funding for the Burbank Unified School District would be about \$1.24 million. Such funding comes in addition to the \$5 billion promised by the May Revise budget to restore California's schools. ♦